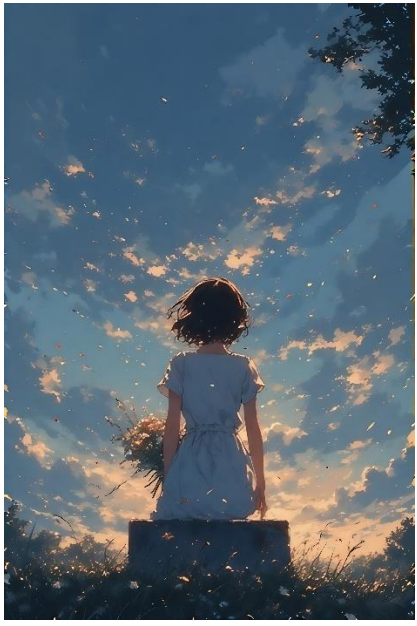
Yaazh's

In Your Eyes

Where Silence Remembers



An Unfinished Love Story

This book is dedicated
for the ones who loved silently,
who waited without hope,
and who stayed even in absence.
— *Yaazh*

IN YOUR EYES:

Where Silence Remembers

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Dedicated to...

To the silence, the heartbreak, and the eyes that taught me everything.

Special thanks to those who believed in me when I disappeared this story found life through you.

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Introduction

"In Your Eyes" is not just a story of love, it's the story of what love hides.

Told first through Prem's quiet presence, and later through Pooja's unraveling heart, the narrative shifts just as life does. From the one who gives everything silently... to the one who realizes it too late.

As Prem, an introvert who expresses more through action than words, slips into the shadows, it is Pooja who leads the reader through the echo he left behind.

This is not just a story about what love says, it's about what it never gets the chance to say.

The Beginning

On a golden evening, beneath the gentle rustle of trees in a quiet, emerald park, two familiar faces were lit with smiles, the kind born from years of unspoken understanding.

Prem and Pooja had been inseparable since their teenage years, their bond stronger than words could ever express. Prem, raised by his warm-hearted grandmother Meera, had no family of his own, except for Pooja and her blind mother, Kavita. After losing both her husband and her sight, Kavita found her entire world in Pooja's presence. And even though they lived in separate houses, the four of them : Meera, Prem, Kavita, and Pooja, lived as one stitched-together family, bound by love rather than blood.

As the sun dipped lower, casting long shadows across the grass, Pooja broke the silence.

"*Prem... I got a job in Bangalore,*" she said, her voice filled with a mix of excitement and hesitation. "*I'll be leaving next week.*"

Prem smiled gently, though his heart sank a little.

"*I'm really happy for you, Pooja. Go chase your dreams and do your best out there. We'll take good care of Aunty.*"

Her lips parted slightly, but no words came. Silence filled the air, soft and aching. She looked at him, her eyes brimming. Then, without warning, she stepped forward and wrapped her arms around him.

"*I'm going to miss you, Prem,*" she whispered, her voice trembling.

Tears gathered in her eyes, the kind that fall not from sadness alone, but from all the unspoken things between two hearts. Prem held her close, blinking away the small tears that dared to escape.

In the days that followed, Prem became the architect of Pooja's happiness. He spent every moment making her smile, taking her to her favorite places, cooking her favorite dishes, sharing laughter as if time wasn't running out. But behind every laugh he offered, hid a silence only he could hear a mind echoing with the ticking clock of parting, and a heart already grieving in advance.

When the day of departure finally arrived, the morning sun rose like a quiet witness to an unspoken sorrow. Prem buried his pain beneath a soft smile and gently woke Pooja with a voice full of warmth.

"*Pooja, just two more hours... Get ready. We need to be at the railway station soon.*"

She stirred lazily, still half-lost in sleep, a small smile curving her lips.

"*Prem... just five more minutes. Let me sleep a little longer,*" she mumbled, her voice childlike and drowsy.

He chuckled under his breath. "*This isn't fair,*" he said playfully, pulling off her blanket and nudging her to sit upright. He drew back the curtains, letting the morning light flood into the room. The sun stung her sleepy eyes, and she groaned, rubbing them as she reluctantly made her way to the bathroom.

Prem waited outside the door, hands folded, pretending patience. A few minutes later, Pooja stepped out, dressed and carrying her packed boxes. The weight of a new beginning in her arms.

Before anything else, she knelt down and touched her mother's feet. Kavita blessed her with trembling hands and a heart too full for words.

"*You'll be happy wherever you go, my dear,*" Kavita said, her voice trembling yet full of blessings. "*Prem, take care on the way*."

Though her words were warm, her heart was heavy just like Meera's, who embraced Pooja tightly with a smile that tried hard to hide her sorrow.

With eyes glistening, Pooja climbed onto Prem's bike. Neither spoke much on the way. The wind did most of the talking, carrying unspoken emotions between them.

At the railway station, their steps slowed as if time itself was reluctant to move forward. Pooja clutched Prem's hand tightly, fingers trembling with hesitation. Her eyes searched his, almost pleading with the moment to stretch a little longer.

Prem smiled soft and broken hiding his ache behind a facade he had practiced all week.

"*Be brave,*" he whispered. "*Be happy, always.*"

She shook her head slowly, not ready, not yet. Then, suddenly, she leaned in and embraced him tightly, desperately, as if letting go would mean losing a part of herself.

"*I will definitely come to see you, Pooja. Don't worry,*" he said gently, placing a hand on her head the way he always did like a promise. "*I'm always there for you.*"

Pooja smiled through her tears. Then came the sound the sharp, final whistle of the train. It lurched forward slowly, as if even the engine understood the weight of that moment.

Her red, tear-filled eyes locked on Prem's until the last second. And Prem… stood there in silence, sending her off with a heartbreak he didn't know how to name.

The platform emptied. But he remained still, aching, and utterly alone.

Unspoken Love

As the days unfolded, like dry pages turning in a forgotten diary, life moved on Prem in Chennai, Pooja in Bangalore. Though separated by miles, both carried the lingering warmth of their memories like fragile petals pressed between the chapters of their lives.

For Prem, the days felt hollow. He had never gone a day without seeing or speaking to Pooja before and now, he was enduring weeks without her laughter, her presence, her chaos. Often, in the middle of doing something mundane stirring tea, walking home, watching the sunset, his eyes would well up, uninvited.

When the silence grew too loud, he would find solace in Kavita's presence. In her calmness, he felt close to Pooja. She, too, filled the space her daughter left behind with Prem's unwavering care. Their bond deepened not as mother and friend, but as mother and son.

Despite the distance, Pooja and Prem made time to connect at least twice a week through video calls.

Those conversations were short, but sacred. They would laugh, tease, and

sometimes fall silent, simply watching each other through the screen, lost in a familiar comfort.

Prem never missed a call. He never let a week go without checking in. And he never let Kavita feel the absence of her daughter.

But one evening, as the city lit up under the soft hum of dusk, Prem called Pooja as usual. The phone rang, but there was no answer. He smiled, brushing it off.

Maybe she's caught up with work.

He tried again later no response.

The next day passed. Then the next. Three whole days without a word. Prem’s smile began to falter. His heart, usually patient and understanding, started to whisper the early notes of worry.

Something didn’t feel right.

But somewhere along the way, things began to change.

Pooja, once rooted in simplicity and deep emotional bonds, slowly adapted to the rhythm of Bangalore’s fast-moving life.

Her weekends, once spent on quiet video calls with her mother or laughing at

Prem's silly jokes, were now filled with parties, selfies, and late-night drives.

She had made new friends: Sneha and Deekshaya, colleagues who carried confidence like perfume and didn't believe in holding back their opinions. With them, Pooja found herself being reshaped, moulded into someone sharper, louder, more assertive. They taught her how to navigate office politics, when to speak with charm and when to wield arrogance like armor.

Conversations with her mother became occasional, mere check-ins.

And Prem… became a shadow.

She never called him back. She saw his name flash across her phone more than once but never dared to answer.

One breezy night, as the trio walked toward a loud, neon-lit party in the city's heart, her phone buzzed again. Prem calling…

Before she could react, Sneha snatched the phone playfully and dropped it into her purse with a mocking grin.

"*Has that clingy friend of yours finally stopped calling?*" Sneha asked, raising an eyebrow with a half-smirk.

"*You know,*" Deekshaya added dryly, "*your lifestyle has levelled up these days. Still keeping in touch with your small-town, emotional bestie?*"

Pooja paused something caught in her throat, but she didn't speak. The questions stung, though they were wrapped in sarcasm and coated with laughter.

Before the silence could stretch further, Sneha looped her arm around Pooja's and changed the subject, dragging her into the music and the noise.

But a part of Pooja... didn't follow.

One evening, as the sun dipped behind the rooftops and Chennai slipped into a slow hush, Kavita arrived at Prem's doorstep her walking stick tapping gently against the ground. Before she could knock, Meera opened the door with a warm smile.

"*Kavita!*" she said gently, taking her by the hand. "*Come in, come in. You should've called, I'd have come to get you.*"

Kavita's face held traces of quiet worry. Meera guided her inside and seated her on the wooden sofa where countless memories had been shared. Hearing their voices, Prem quickly washed his face, hiding the salt of his tears. He stepped into the room with a carefully built smile.

"*Come, Aunty! I was just getting ready to come see you,*" he said warmly, masking the ache in his heart with practiced kindness.

Kavita leaned forward slightly, her fingers nervously twisting the edge of her saree. "*My daughter… hasn't called me in two days, Prem,*" she said, her voice laced with fear. "*I.. I didn't know who else to ask…*"

Prem's smile faltered for a moment, just a flicker, but he quickly steadied it. He sat beside her and took her hand gently.

"*That didn't happen, Aunty,*" he said softly. "*She's doing well there. I spoke to her just yesterday. She's been a little busy, that's all… felt guilty that she couldn't talk to you.*"

Even as he spoke the lie, he wiped away a stray tear from his cheek with the back of his hand, pretending it was nothing.

Kavita exhaled, her body relaxing. "*This one word is enough, Prem… It's a relief to my heart. Thank you.*"

With motherly love, she touched Prem's head and gently stroked his hair. Without a word, he held her hand and placed it over his chest, the place where he carried both his love and his ache.

It was a lie, yes. But in that moment, it felt right. Because the peace in Kavita's face, the soft smile that returned to her lips, that was worth more than the truth.

As the steam from Meera's tea kettle curled quietly into the air, the two elderly women sat facing each other, the silence between them growing heavier by the minute. Prem lingered nearby, sensing something unspoken, something coming.

"*Has Pooja found a groom yet, Kavita?*" Meera asked gently, her tone casua but her eyes curious.

Kavita adjusted the edge of her saree and sat straighter, her voice unusually calm.

"*That's actually why I came here today,*" she said softly.

"*I don't know how much longer I'll have sight... or life, for that matter. I don't want to be a burden to anyone, especially not to my daughter. So I've thought long and hard about this and made a decision.*"

Prem and Meera exchanged glances, waiting.

"*I want Pooja to marry your grandson, Meera. I want Prem to be her husband.*"

The words landed like a quiet thunder in the room.

Meera blinked, startled. "*Kavita... but how? They've been friends all their lives. Can two friends become life partners just like that? And what if Pooja or Prem don't agree?*"

Kavita's face remained firm, serene. "*My daughter has never disobeyed me. She respects me. If I tell her this is the right path, she'll trust me. And in my heart, I know she will want this too. She and Prem share something that most couples search for all their lives.*"

Prem sat frozen. His heart raced, this was the one thing he had dreamed of, but never dared to expect. Now that it stood before him, he didn't know how to hold it.

"*But… Aunty…*" Prem whispered, his voice trembling.

Kavita turned to him, eyes kind and strong. "*Tell me, Prem. If there's something on your mind, speak it now. This is your life too. Your truth matters.*"

For a moment, silence returned thick, heavy, and full of unshed tears.

"*Ever since the day we parted…*" Prem's voice faltered, his fingers nervously fidgeting with the edge of his shirt, "*…there's been a shift inside me. Something I can't explain not in words, at least.*"

Both women leaned in, their eyes fixed on him.

"*The thoughts I used to have when she was around the way she smiled, the way she spoke they've only grown louder now that she's gone,*" he continued, eyes staring at a spot on the floor as if it held answers.

"*I don't know what this is anymore. Is it the height of friendship? Or… the beginning of love?*" His voice cracked slightly. "*I don't understand anything. I'm confused. Tired. Scared.*"

He looked up finally, only to find Meera and Kavita smiling at each other and then breaking into gentle laughter.

It wasn't mocking. It was warm. Familiar. As if they had been waiting for him to catch up to something they had known all along.

Prem blinked, even more confused. "*Why are you both laughing…?*"

Meera touched his shoulder, eyes twinkling. "*Because, my dear boy, every heart that falls in love thinks it's confusion first.*"

Kavita nodded, her voice kind. "*And that confusion? It's the softest truth love ever tells.*"

Prem sat back, stunned not by their words, but by the sudden realization that maybe… he already had his answer.

"*So what are we waiting for?*" Meera said with a spark in her eyes. "*Just ask Pooja once everything will fall into place.*"

Prem looked up, a flicker of determination lighting up his face. "*No,*" he said firmly. "*Not over the phone. Not through anyone else. I'll go meet her… in person.*"

His voice held a quiet fire, not of recklessness, but of long-held love finally stepping out of the shadows.

Meera and Kavita exchanged glances and nodded, pride softening their smiles.

"*She'll understand,*" Kavita whispered, as if speaking to herself. "*A daughter knows the heart that's loved her the longest*."

And then Meera added, "*Her birthday is next week, isn't it?*"

Prem nodded, his lips curving into a small, hopeful smile.

"*Perfect,*" Meera said. "*Go to her. Take your love out of your heart... and place it in her hands*."

Prem stood silently for a moment, his heart racing with both fear and faith. The decision was made. The journey was calling. And for the first time, he was no longer running away from his feelings.

He was running toward them.

The Proposal

The week passed slowly, each day heavy with Prem's growing anticipation. And finally, on a quiet Saturday morning, he arrived in Bangalore, heart pounding, hands trembling, yet a strange peace in his chest.

He knew everything about her, her office address, her favorite coffee shop, even the time she liked to stand by her window and watch the rain. When he inquired about her residence, a kind neighbor smiled and said, "*She's celebrating her birthday tonight with some office friends. They've all gone out for a party.*"

Prem nodded politely, his heart already racing ahead. Tonight... it has to be tonight.

As the sun sank behind the skyline, casting a golden haze across the city, Prem made his way to the venue. In his hand, he carried a delicate bouquet of Baby's Breath, her favorite. Soft, simple, and silent, just like the love he had always held for her.

But the moment he stepped inside, the warmth in his chest began to fade.

The air was thick with music and the strong scent of alcohol far overpowering the soft fragrance of the flowers in his hand. Laughter echoed. Glasses clinked. Lights blinked in strange, dizzying colors.

This wasn't the world he had imagined for her.

He asked a few people politely, "*Where's Pooja?*" Most were too tipsy to respond clearly, but one gestured toward a room at the back.

Prem took a deep breath, fixed his shirt, and smoothed back his hair. He was going to see her after so long. He couldn't look shaken not now.

The hallway felt endless. His steps were slow, cautious. Hope and nervousness walked beside him.

And then, he reached the door.

He placed his hand on the knob, his other still clutching the bouquet. This is it, he thought. Tonight, I give her my heart.

But as he pushed the door open, what awaited him inside stopped his breath.

His fingers loosened around the flowers.

His eyes widened.

And his heart... cracked before he could speak a word.

Pooja, who had never drunk before, finished a bottle of beer in front of him today. While he was in shock, a man in the room came towards him.

"*Who are you? I haven't seen you here before!*" He stood up to push Prem away.

"*I'm Prem, Pooja's friend.*" He replied, suppressing his anger. Sneha noticed this.

"*Oh, are you that dirty male lovebird?*" Sneha and the man nearby laughed mockingly.

"*I have come to meet my friend and greet her, please make way out of respect.*" He spoke angrily, not looking her in the eye, and gritting his teeth.

"*Let him in!*" Pooja growled intoxicatedly. "*What's wrong with you now? Why have you come to meet me? Did I tell you to come?*" She pierced Prem's heart with questions aimed at hurting his feelings.

"*Happy birthday, Pooja.*" Holding out the bouquet, Sneha snatched it and threw it away.

"*If you come as an uninvited guest, eat what you get, stand aside, and leave as soon as the party is over. Don't try to seduce her by holding out the bouquet!*" Sneha scolded him harshly.

Everyone's laughter didn't matter to him, but his friend Pooja also made fun of him, which made him even more depressed.

Just as they were trampling on the bouquet lying there, they trampled on and distorted his feelings here. Prem left the room with a painful laugh.

The next day, Prem, who had reached Chennai, called Pooja once. But when he found out that she had blocked his phone number, he slammed the door and cried. His mind and his grandmother Meera's health are both deteriorating.

Pooja's mother Kavita called Prem. "*Prem, have you met Pooja? How is she? Did she say anything?*" she asked in anticipation. Prem also hid her worries and buried her tears, "*She looks like a queen! New friends, new place, she has changed! When she saw me, she first asked about you, then she couldn't bear to say goodbye and never left me. Still, I came to take care of you, Aunty!*" She made Kavita smile by telling lies.

"*I will never regret thinking of my daughter again! Getting her married to a man like you is like taking a burden off my mind in one fell swoop*." Kavita said with tears of joy and kissed Prem's head lovingly.

Disappearance

After a whirlwind week of birthday celebrations, laughter, office selfies, and late-night hangouts, Pooja finally found a moment of stillness.

She hadn't thought of Prem. Not even once.

Her life was a blur of parties and promotions, new dresses and casual drinks, with no room left for old memories or familiar silences.

But as she left the office that evening, a sliver of guilt tugged at her heart. She pulled out her phone and called home.

"*Mom, how are you? How's your health?*" she asked, her tone light routine.

"*I'm doing fine, dear,*" Kavita replied, though her voice held the weight of something unspoken. "*Are you resting enough? Eating properly?*"

"*Yes, yes. Everything's fine here,*" Pooja answered, tucking her phone between her shoulder and ear. After a moment of hesitation, she added softly, "*Why didn't you come for my birthday, Mom?*"

There was a pause.

"*That's why I sent Prem,*" Kavita said carefully. "*Have you… forgotten?*"

Pooja froze. Her heart stuttered for a beat. *Prem?*

"*Oh… yes, Mom. I remember,*" she lied quickly, forcing a smile into her voice. "*We… we spent time together.*"

But her throat had gone dry. She hadn't seen him. Hadn't known. And the lie sat heavy on her tongue.

Kavita, sensing something off, chose not to press. "*Anyway… I'll hang up now, dear. I just stopped by to check on Meera. Poor boy, Prem. He's been taking care of both of us all by himself these days. Even when he's unwell, he never says a word.*"

Her voice cracked ever so slightly at the end.

Suddenly, something inside Pooja trembled.

As soon as the call ended, she stared at the screen for a long second, then quickly searched for Prem's number and hit dial.

No answer.

She tried again. And again. Still nothing.

For the first time in months, her fingers trembled. Her chest tightened.

Why isn't he answering? Where is he?

She waited a few minutes, hoping for a call back. But the silence that followed wasn't the silence of distance. It was the silence of absence.

She locked her phone and stared out the window.

For the first time… she missed him.

The rain had started that morning, a slow, whispering drizzle, like the sky was mourning something before it even happened.

Kavita stepped out of the auto with anxious hands and a prayer on her lips. The hospital hallway was heavy with antiseptic and silence. She found Prem sitting on the bench outside the ICU, hunched forward, his eyes red, clothes wrinkled, hope fading.

"*Prem…*" she called softly, nearing him.

He looked up, and the mask of strength fell away.

"*Grandma...*" His voice broke. "*The doctor said she may not make it. It's all in God's hands now.*"

And just like that, he fell into her arms, a boy who had held too much pain for too long.

Kavita placed her hand gently on his head, fighting back her own tears.

They waited. Hours passed like years.

And then... silence.

Meera was gone.

The days that followed blurred into a haze of rituals and relatives. Faces he barely knew came to claim not only condolences, but property. The small house, his only anchor, slipped from his fingers willed away to distant, unknown kin.

Prem didn't fight. He didn't have the strength.

But the day he walked out of that home, carrying just a small bag and a hundred memories, something inside him shattered.

Not wanting to burden Kavita with his pain, he quietly rented a small room just a

few streets away. He told no one. Not even Pooja.

Each day, he walked past his old home. Sometimes he would stand across the street and just… look. As if hoping Meera might open the door one last time and call him inside for tea.

Realizing he couldn't care for Kavita like before, Prem found a kind-hearted caretaker to stay with her.

He left behind strict instructions, regular payments, and one important detail, Pooja's phone number, in case something ever went wrong.

And then, with the weight of memories too heavy to carry in that city, he did what broken hearts often do.

He left.

Transferred his job to another city. Packed what little he had. And disappeared not in anger, but in quiet surrender.

He never blamed anyone.

He just wanted peace.

Regret and Realization

Pooja's life, once lit by city lights and weekend parties, had started dimming quietly.

Her heart, once carefree, now beat with unease. The silence from Prem and the thought of her aging mother left her restless. Sleep was scattered, and laughter felt like something distant, foreign, and undeserved.

She threw herself into work, trying to distract herself from the hollow that had started forming inside her.

But truth has a strange way of finding its moment.

One afternoon, she walked into the office earlier than usual. As she passed the hallway near the breakroom, voices whispered behind a half-closed door familiar ones.

She paused.

"*This Pooja,*" Sneha scoffed, "*she's working harder than us again. If she keeps this up, how are we ever going to get ahead?*"

"*We'll get her under our thumb,*" Deekshaya replied with a sly grin. "*Use her while we can. Get what we need. Let her burn herself out while we shine. Saves us time, and money.*"

Pooja stood frozen.

Her breath caught. Her knees almost buckled.

The laughter that followed felt like knives in her back.

She turned away slowly, her world spinning in silence. And then, without warning, tears burst forth, hot, guilty, endless. What have I become? she thought. How did I drift so far from everything that mattered?

She thought of her mother.

She thought of Prem.

And her heart screamed his name.

Fumbling with her phone, she searched for his number, desperation building with each breath. But just as she was about to press "Call" her phone buzzed.

An unknown number flashed on the screen.

“*Hello… who is this?*” she asked, her voice low, shaken.

“*I’m Kavita’s caretaker,*” came the calm reply. “*Your mother asked me to call you… that’s why*.”

The world seemed to stop again.

Caretaker?

Her mind stumbled. Her heart raced.

If someone else was taking care of her mother… then what happened to Prem?

The phone trembled in her hand. Questions flooded her mind like a dam breaking loose, painful, urgent, and all too late.

That night, Pooja sat silently, her packed bags beside her, her mind a storm.

She had submitted her transfer request, one step closer to going back, to finding answers, to him.

As she zipped up her last suitcase, Sneha and Deekshaya barged in, smiling like snakes in velvet.

"*So, you're leaving?*" Sneha asked sweetly, venom behind every syllable.

"*Running back to your old, boring life? Or should we say… that pathetic friend zone you once called home?*" Deekshaya smirked.

Pooja didn't respond. Her silence was calm but her blood boiled.

Sneha walked closer and touched her shoulder mockingly.

"*You're seriously going back to that dusty little life? Come on, Pooja. This…*" she waved her hand around the fancy flat, the clothes, the nightlife, "*this is you now.*"

That was it.

Pooja's eyes narrowed.

In one swift, burning moment, her palm cracked across Sneha's cheek, loud and unapologetic.

"*You know what?*" she growled, eyes filled with tears and fury.

"*Because of people like you, I walked away from someone who loved me like no one else ever could. Someone who treated my mother like his own. Someone who saw light in me when I didn't even know it existed.*"

Sneha held her cheek, stunned into silence.

"*And you call that life boring? I'd rather live in a small, broken home filled with real love than breathe in this palace of poison!*"

Without waiting for a response, Pooja stormed out, dragging her suitcase behind her, each step a beat of freedom, each tear, a truth regained.

The Search

The first thing that flooded Pooja's heart when she set foot in Chennai was a memory. Prem walking beside her, teasing her over her slow pace, carrying her bag without asking, protecting her shadow without being asked.

That echo now felt painfully distant.

She sat in the auto silently, watching the blur of streets pass by like ghosts of what was once home. As the vehicle turned into her neighborhood, her chest tightened. "*What if he's still angry? What if I'm already too late?*"

She paid the driver and stepped into the small, familiar home. But what she saw next rooted her in shock.

Her mother, Kavita, sat on the sofa... her eyes covered with soft cotton pads, her body weak but peaceful.

Pooja dropped her bag and rushed forward, panic setting in.

"*Maa? What happened to your eyes?*" she asked, her voice trembling.

The caretaker came forward and gently explained,

"*A donor came forward. It was arranged by Prem… Your mother received the transplant just two weeks ago.*"

Pooja froze. *Prem?*

The world tilted slightly under her feet. Without a word, she dropped to her knees and hugged her mother tightly.

Tears spilled without sound, not of sorrow this time, but of gratitude, remorse, and a love that had come to light far too late.

Her mother, sensing her daughter's presence, smiled faintly. "*Don't cry, dear… I can't see you yet, but I can feel you. I know you're home now.*"

Pooja wept harder. She had come home searching for forgiveness, but instead, she was welcomed by a sacrifice so pure, it broke her all over again.

"*Do you know where Prem is, Amma?*" Pooja asked softly, her voice laced with a hope she could barely hold.

Kavita's lips curled into a faint smile, but sorrow flickered in her eyes. "*I don't know, dear… It still hurts me that he wasn't by my side even during the surgery.*"

Pooja gently hugged her mother, pressing a kiss on her forehead. She stepped out into the Chennai heat, the streets buzzing with life, yet her world felt frozen. She knocked on every door in the neighborhood, searching for a whisper, a sign, a face, anything that could lead her to Prem. But the alleys only echoed back her own silence.

She spent her weekdays buried in office files, but weekends turned into long pilgrimages to every street corner, every old hangout spot where she and Prem had once made memories. But every trail ended in disappointment. Kavita, though quiet, noticed her daughter's anguish, the skipped meals, the hollow eyes, the quiet sobs behind closed doors.

Two weeks passed.

The day came. In a silent hospital room filled with sterile light and trembling anticipation, the bandages were slowly peeled from Kavita's eyes. As light trickled into her pupils for the first time in years, the first image her mind registered was her daughter.

Her hands flew to her mouth, and a soundless sob escaped.

Pooja broke down too, wrapping her arms around her mother. The two women cried one for the beauty of sight, the other for the price it had cost.

"*Please don't cry, Mrs. Kavita,*" the doctor said gently. "*Your eyes are just beginning to adjust, let's not strain them.*"

Kavita looked into her daughter's face with wonder. "*Pooja… where is Prem? I must thank him first. He's the reason I can finally see you.*"

Pooja froze. Her throat dried. She looked away.

Just then, the caretaker approached, her face pale. "*Pooja madam… I need to speak with you privately.*"

Pooja stepped aside, her heart thudding. "*What is it? Why do you look so scared?*"

The woman hesitated, her eyes glossed with tears. "*I… I've been holding this back, but I can't anymore.*"

The words came like a storm. "*Prem… is no more. He's the one who donated his eyes to your mother.*"

The world crashed.

Pooja's knees gave in as the room around her blurred. The words clung to her like shards of glass.

"*A week before your mother's treatment,*" the caretaker continued, her voice cracking, "*Prem transferred every last rupee to Kavita's bank account. He registered for eye donation... and then… he ended his life. I only found out after the autopsy. I signed as the guardian for his body to be buried. When I learned his wish, I begged the doctors to give his eyes to your mother. And they did.*"

The words hung in the air like funeral bells. Pooja couldn't feel her limbs, only a storm of regret, grief, and guilt tearing through her chest. She stumbled into the room, and there sat her mother, her eyes now vibrant with new life, gifted by a boy who once asked for nothing but love.

"*What's wrong, Pooja?*" Kavita asked, her new eyes scanning her daughter's shaken face.

Pooja's gaze met hers and for a fleeting second, it was as though Prem himself was looking back at her.

A lifetime of memories flooded her: Prem's quiet sacrifices, the moments she

took for granted, the laughter they shared, and the love she never returned in time. Her sobs grew uncontrollable.

She crumbled into her mother's lap, weeping bitterly, not just for what was lost, but for what she had never said.

The caretaker rushed in and gently helped her sit, wrapping an arm around her shaking shoulders, whispering silent words of comfort.

A few days later, on Prem's birthday, Pooja walked through the quiet cemetery holding a bouquet of baby's breath, the same flowers he once gifted her.

She placed them gently on his grave, the earth still damp with memory. Sitting beside the headstone, she looked up at the cloudy sky and closed her eyes.

"*Prem… you gave me so much, and all I ever did was fall short. I thought I could make things right, but you gave too much, too selflessly, too soon. Even if I spent the rest of my life trying, it wouldn't match the love you gave me. But I promise… I'll live thinking of you. Breathing for you. Seeing through you.*"

She gently touched Prem's cemetery.

"*I will live forever… in your eyes.*"

Author's Note

Dear Reader,

This story holds something very close to everyone's heart. The kind of love that stays silent, gives everything, and never asks for anything back.

Prem, my main character, is an introvert. He doesn't express emotions openly. That's why, after the midpoint of the story, the perspective shifts from Prem's quiet world to Pooja's emotional awakening.

I chose not to write Prem's final moment directly because that's not who he was. His death, like his love, happens in silence.

Through Pooja, we uncover the truth, just like she does. Slowly, painfully, and piece by piece.

If you ever felt like you noticed someone's worth too late… this story is for you.

— With love,

Yaazh